
D. Boon The Day the Music Died: Linda Kite in her Own Words

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Dennes "D." Boon was a pioneer in the Los Angeles punk rock scene of the 80s, along with his band, the Minutemen. He was a singer, political songwriter and guitarist who turned into a hurricane on stage. Rocking back and forth on his heels and jumping frenetically as he spit out staccato lyrics and attacked his treble-heavy guitar, he was the center of a whirlwind. D. Boon's life was tragically cut short on a lonely stretch of the Arizona desert at the age of 27. He was traveling with his fiancé, Linda Kite at the wheel, and her sister Jeannine in the passenger seat. He was asleep in the back of the old van when a sudden impact threw Dennes onto the road, where he was killed instantly. The accident also left Jeannine permanently disabled. Through years of rumors and speculation as to what exactly happened, Linda Kite has kept her silence. Now, 29 years later, Linda has finally decided it is time to set the record straight, even though it means reliving that tragic night. -Ed.

It's December 22, 2014, fully 29 years after what was not only a life changing event for me and some others personally, but for much of the punk rock world in a big way. It's likely a good time to say a few things - finally.

Let's start with the assertions that I fell asleep at the wheel.

Yes, I did say that to the cops, and indeed it is what I thought had happened since I was very confused immediately thereafter; the ambulance had not even arrived.

The truth is that the left rear wheel axle broke, as it had in most of the 1979 Dodge Vans of that make and model (there were class action suits left and right). If you remember the year that the Federal Government initially bailed out Chrysler, well you can reach your own conclusions. It also gives insight to the nature of the American Automobile industry.

When the van started to break down I thought we had a flat, so I took my foot off the gas in order to let the van slow down on its own flat self. But instead, it was the wheel coming off, which caused the van to go flying in mid air. The van rolled over 1 ¾ times, and finally landed in what was fatefully one of the deepest places

in the middle of that desert (most of the highway divider is just reasonable flat land, but in a few places it dips down into little canyons).

Upon starting to fly in mid air, I grabbed the steering wheel and started screaming, realizing this was not going to end well, then I promptly blacked out. Yes, the body and mind have curious ways of protecting us from danger that way. By the time we landed passenger side down, and I fell from the driver's seat (gravity sucks), the impact of my left ankle hitting the carburetor and shattering is what brought me back to an "awake" state. Albeit a very confused awake state.

It was then that I realized we'd been in an accident, and I hobbled to the side of the road to flag down anyone for help. A truck pulled over, as did some good Samaritans. I explained to these folks that my sister and fiancé were both still out there; so they put me in their car and started the search. There was a kid instructed to stay with me as I proceeded to go thru the stages of that kind of shock and trauma.

Eventually a cop would come over to question me, and all I could reply was, "I don't know what happened. I must have fallen asleep at the wheel!" He proceeded to start asking me who was driving, when and why, and how long, and why I had not pulled over to rest -the usual logical set of questions. The problem was, I was still in a very bewildered state. Certainly you can tell by my answers that I had no knowledge whatsoever about the condition of Jeannine and Dennes at that point. I didn't understand why questioning me was more important than joining the search team. At one point, the cop asked why I was the one driving, to which I could only rationally reply, "Because everyone else was sleeping!" as in, "Duh, how can people sleeping drive, you moron!" So there you have it. That is how the police report reflected that I fell asleep at the wheel. The press ran with it, and it became the official story.

Anyone who knew me (and knows me), could not understand that I could fall asleep at the wheel. I was the one who regularly drove very late at night, and was a skilled, safe driver you could count on. Not a drinker and not a druggie. Let's face it - I'm a lightweight, and a bit of control freak, so reckless driving was just not part of my repertoire. I was, in fact, the one who could always be counted on to get us home very late at night after any long gig night.

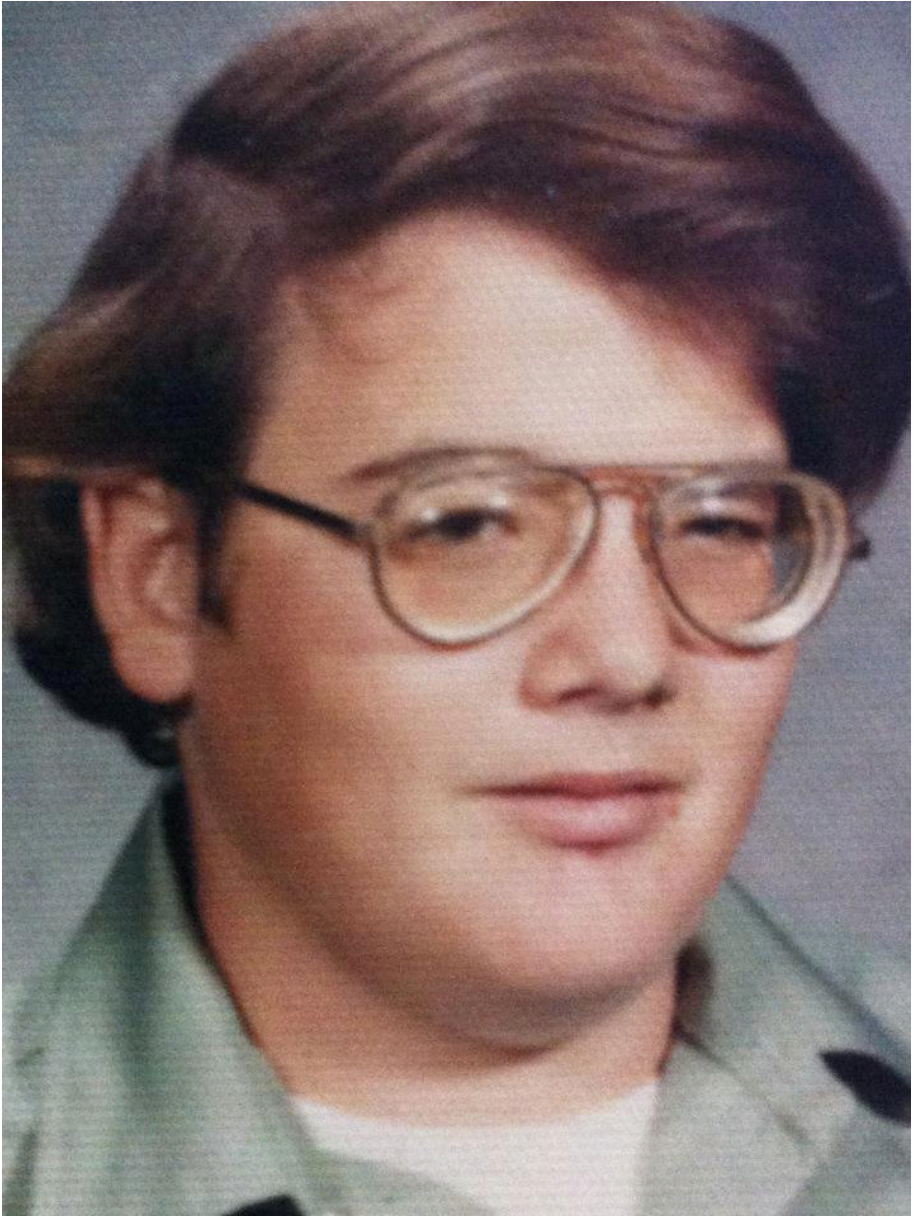
It was a couple days later, when Dennes' father came to talk to me, that we put the pieces together. He was a mechanic, so he went to the tow yard to see the

Van. He looked at the wheel axle, and then went to the accident site and saw the hole in the ground where the wheel fell off, which was still visible at the time. He compared the tire marks and debris with the police report and sketches, and reached some preliminary conclusions.

He came to ask me a question while I was staying at his sister's house recovering from my ankle surgery. He asked, "When did the wheel come off?" Hearing this, my head exploded as I then vividly watched an instant replay in very slow motion picture stills whizzing by to the part right before I blacked out. We discussed it and put the pieces together, a little better than the police had bothered to at that point. The police reports were amended to include the corrected information.

That is how I came to learn and understand the nature of the accident that would forever change not just my life.

RIP D.Boon 1958 -1985



Dennis Boon 6th grade Park Western Elementary School (courtesy of Linda Kite)



D Boon in Kalamazoo (Dale Warner)

